

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A process for reducing ~~the~~ a concentration of MEHQ in acrylic acid which has been from 75% to 105% neutralized, by a continuous adsorption on activated carbon.

2. (Currently amended) A The process as defined in of claim 1, wherein the acrylic acid has been from 90% to 103% neutralized.

3. (Currently amended) A The process as claimed in either of claims claim 1 or 2, wherein the acrylic acid has been from 95% to 101% neutralized.

4. (Currently amended) A The process as claimed in any of claims claim 1 to 3, wherein the acrylic acid has been from 98% to 100% neutralized.

5. (Currently amended) A The process as claimed in any of claims claim 1 to 4, wherein the continuous adsorption is carried out on a fixed bed.

6. (Currently amended) A The process as claimed in any of claims claim 1 to 5, wherein the continuous adsorption is carried out in one or more columns which have been filled with activated carbon.

7. (Currently amended) A The process as claimed in any of claims claim 1 to 6, which is carried out at temperatures a temperature between 0°C and 30°C, in particular between 3°C and 20°C.

8. (Currently amended) A The process as claimed in any of claims claim 1 to 7, wherein 90% by weight of the activated carbon has a particle size between 350 µm and 1800 µm.

9. (Currently amended) A The process as claimed in any of claims claim 1 to 8, wherein the activated carbon has been acid-treated.

10. (Currently amended) A The process as claimed in any of claims claim 1 to 8, wherein the activated carbon has a specific surface area of from 900 to 1100 m²/g.

11. (Currently amended) A The process as claimed in any of claims claim 1 to 10, wherein the activated carbon has a density between 400 g/l and 500 g/l.

12. (Currently amended) A The process as claimed in any of claims claim 1 to 11, wherein the concentration of MEHQ in the acrylic acid is reduced by at least 50%, preferably at least 75%, in particular at least 90%.

13. (Currently amended) A process for preparing ~~superabsorbents, including the a~~ superabsorbent comprising a step of optionally combining 75% to 105% neutralized acrylic acid whose MEHQ content has been reduced by continuous adsorption on activated carbon according to any of the preceding claims with a less neutralized, in particular nonneutralized, acrylic acid, subsequently polymerizing the acrylic acid, and optionally surface postcrosslinking the resulting superabsorbent.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (New) The process of claim 1 which is carried out at a temperature between 3°C and 20°C.

16. (New) The process of claim 1 wherein the concentration of MEHQ in the acrylic acid is reduced by at least 75%.

17. (New) The process of claim 1 wherein the concentration of MEHQ in the acrylic acid is reduced by at least 90%.

18. (New) The process of claim 13 wherein the less neutralized acrylic acid is unneutralized acrylic acid.

19. (New) A hygiene article comprising a superabsorbent prepared according to the process of claim 13.